

**NATIONAL GALLERY OF CANADA**  
**and its affiliate,**  
**the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography**

***COMMUNICATIONS POLICY***

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**National Gallery of Canada  
and its affiliate,  
the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography**

**COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

As federal public institutions, the National Gallery of Canada and the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography (“the Gallery”) must be open and responsive to the people of Canada and the arts community as well as accountable to the government. The Gallery seeks to communicate its programs and the experience of art to as wide an audience as possible, in both official languages and using all possible means. To ensure a continuous free flow of open, relevant, understandable and reliable information the Gallery’s Communications Policy requires it:

- *to adhere to the principles of openness, integrity, and objectivity in all of its external and internal communications;*
- *to maintain consistency with related government policies and guidelines;*
- *to react responsibly to requests for information while respecting the constraints of the Museums Act and the Privacy Act; -*
- *to provide to the public across the country and abroad, information about its policies, programs, functions and services that is accurate, complete, objective, timely, relevant and understandable;*
- *to ensure that the National Gallery of Canada is visible and answerable to the public that it serves; and*
- *to take an assertive approach to communications, particularly with respect to the media relations and promotions of public services.*

Because communications is a shared role, the whole staff of the Gallery is committed to living up to these standards, from the Board of Trustees through senior management to employees on the floor. Responsibility for application of the specifics of the Policy rests with the Director, Public Affairs, under whom Communications and Marketing, Publications, Education and Public Programs, Visitor Services, Exhibitions, Curatorial and Special Events all work together to create awareness of the Gallery and its programs.

Although not bound by the federal government's communications policy, the Gallery's Communications Policy is governed by a number of statutory requirements, including the *Museums Act*, the *Official Languages Act* and the *Access to Information Act*, and by Treasury Board guidelines calling for "prompt, courteous and impartial service" to the public.

## **2. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to establish the overall guidelines for communications-related standards and procedures at the National Gallery of Canada and its affiliate the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography.

## **3. BACKGROUND**

The mandate of the National Gallery of Canada is:

*"to develop, maintain and make known, throughout Canada and internationally, a collection of works of art, both historic and contemporary, with special but not exclusive reference to Canada,*

*and to further knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of art in general among all Canadians."* The Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography (CMCP), was established as an affiliate of the National Gallery of Canada in 1985 to collect, interpret and disseminate Canadian contemporary photography.

As a corporate entity, the National Gallery of Canada and its affiliate the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography requires an explicit communication policy and related communications strategies, objectives and programs designed to reflect the overall mandate, policy, programs and functions of the organization.

The National Gallery of Canada as a Crown corporation comes under schedule III of the Financial Administration Act, and so is not obliged to adhere to the federal government's communications policy, which applies to schedule I and II departments and agencies. Nevertheless, as with many other government guidelines and policies, the National Gallery follows the spirit of the policy, which is:

To provide information to the public on its policies, programs and services that is accurate, complete, objective, timely, relevant and understandable; to take into account the concerns and views of the public in establishing priorities, developing policies and implementing programs; and to ensure that the government is visible, accessible and answerable to the public that it serves.

#### **4. POLICY STATEMENT**

The National Gallery policy is to communicate the Gallery's programs and the experience of art to the Canadian people, with a view to maximizing National Gallery visibility and attendance, and its visitors' knowledge.

The National Gallery's policy is addressed to communicate to various publics in an open and transparent way, and responds to them in a timely fashion.

Thus, the mandate of the National Gallery Public Affairs Department derives from the Museums Act's injunction to make known the collections and to further knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of art.

The free flow of information between the National Gallery of Canada and the public should be carried out through both formal and informal exchanges in a dialogue that is continuous, open, relevant, understandable and reliable.

Therefore it is the policy of the National Gallery of Canada:

- 4.1 To adhere to the principles of openness, integrity, and objectivity in all of its external and internal communications;
- 4.2 To maintain consistency with related government policies and guidelines;
- 4.3 To react responsibly to requests for information while respecting the constraints of the Museum Act and Privacy Act;
- 4.4 To provide to the public across the country and abroad, information about its policies, programs, functions and services that is accurate, complete, objective, timely, relevant and understandable;
- 4.5 To ensure that the National Gallery of Canada is visible and answerable to the public that it serves;
- 4.6 To take an assertive approach to communications, particularly with respect to the media relations and promotions of public services. Communicators are expected to be assertive in providing advice and support to the Director and the Board of Trustees.

## **5. COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES**

### **5.1 Communications Function:**

Communications ensures that the public receives information about an organization's policies, programs and services, and that the concerns and interests of the public are taken into account in the formulation and implementation of its policies, programs and functions. It includes:

- a. Management of communications: which includes co-ordination of research and analysis, advice and planning, and the implementation of communications programs and activities;
- b. Communications research: in Public Affairs, this includes the monitoring of the public environment to assess public wants, needs, perceptions and understandings with respect to policies, programs and functions;
- c. Communications analysis and evaluation: analysis of communications research and evaluation of communications programs and projects against planned objectives and professional standards;
- d. Communications advice: counseling management on policy development, program planning and implementation, and public issues; and
- e. Communications planning: development of corporate and program communications plans, integrating major objectives of the Gallery's and responding to public concerns and issues.

### **5.2 Accountability**

The Board of Trustees is accountable through the Minister of Canadian Heritage, to Parliament. It is responsible for the strategic policy and planning frameworks of the Gallery.

The Director is accountable to the Board for the management of the Corporation (in line with the Financial Administration Act) and the establishment of the policies, programs and priorities relating to the Gallery. This accountability is exercised through the executives of the Gallery.

The Director of Public Affairs is accountable to the Director of the National Gallery of Canada for managing the communications function in the Gallery and coordinating the communications component of each program, function and activity.

The Gallery's managers are accountable to their superiors for the communications components of their specific program.

### **5.3 Roles and Responsibilities**

Communications is a shared role, requiring co-operation among senior management, the communications staff, policy advisors and program managers in policy and program development and delivery. It also includes every staff member and person employed or contracted by the National Gallery of Canada.

The Director will provide leadership in establishing the priorities and overall themes of the Gallery's communications. Specifically, the following are the most important responsibilities within the function:

#### **a. Board of Trustees**

- Provides corporate communications directions to the Director of the Gallery;
- Submits the Corporate Plan Summary and the Annual Report to Parliament.

#### **b. Senior Management**

- Defines the communications objectives and priorities; and
- Ensures appropriate distribution of resources among all programs and functions for communications planning and management.

#### **c. Director**

- Designates a Director of Public Affairs to support the Gallery in coordinating and directing implementation of the communications policy;
- Ensures the integration of strategic communications plans with the Gallery's overall plans and in all business plans;
- Ensures that the public environment has been fully assessed for all new initiatives, and that communications form an integral part of that plan; and
- Ensures the development of an annual operational communications plan.

**d. Director of Public Affairs**

- Establishes procedures for liaison to ensure that the communication of policy and operation initiatives are coordinated, with particular reference to media relations;
- Assists Gallery managers to define their communications priorities, objectives and requirements;
- Designates managers and specialists at the Gallery to serve as ad hoc spokespersons for communications with the public, the media and members of Parliament on subjects in their area of expertise;
- Ensures that communications staff and spokespersons are afforded the training and professional development required;
- Ensures liaison and co-operation in communications matters with other levels of government and Crown Corporations;
- Ensures a balance of professional resources among the principle element of the communication function: management, research, analysis, evaluation, advice and planning of communications; and
- Carries out the activities defined in the communications operational plans.

**e. Communications Staff**

- Provides support and leadership to the institution in achieving corporate objectives, proposing policies, in developing programs and activities and in assessing major issues and determining the Gallery's response; and
- Executes the operational plan of the Gallery.

**f. Gallery Managers**

The Gallery Managers are responsible and accountable for their programs and must actively participate in planning and executing the communications policy by:

- identifying their clientele, assessing their concerns and information or service needs;
- participating in and facilitating the planning, implementation and measurement of communications objectives and initiatives;
- allocating resources for their communications programs (within program budgets) and setting priorities; and
- establishing effective relationships with their colleagues in the National Gallery, the public, their clients, and the media (as appropriate).

## **g. Gallery Employees**

Gallery employees are responsible for promoting the Gallery's key messages and for bringing any communications issues to the attention of the Gallery.

## **6. APPLICATION OF THE POLICY**

Under the direction of the Director, Public Affairs, the Communications and Marketing Section works closely with the Director, Senior Management Committee, and all other National Gallery sections especially with Publications, Education and Public Programs, Visitor Services, Exhibitions, Curatorial, Special Events.

The Communications and Marketing Section is responsible for establishing the National Gallery's presence, visibility, and "image" or profile, and for managing and maintaining that visibility in order to attract visitors to and create awareness of the National Gallery and its programs.

This is accomplished for example through media relations, issues management, paid advertising, media and "familiarization" tours, market research, and tourism liaison. In order to position the National Gallery in the spectrum of area visitor attractions, liaison is maintained through this service with agencies like the National Capital Commission, the other museums and the National Arts Centre, as well as with other cultural agencies whether federal, provincial, regional, or national like the Canada Council, the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec, Arts Court, and the Ontario Arts Council.

### **6.1 Internal Communications**

Effective internal communications systems are designed to enhance the Gallery's productivity and effectiveness. The Gallery will strive to establish and maintain effective internal communications designed to channel lateral and vertical information throughout the organization.

### **6.2 Media Relations**

The function of media relations is one of the most visible aspects of the Gallery's communications program. Increased contacts with the media would afford considerable opportunities for the Gallery to benefit from positive coverage and from clear dissemination and illustration of its policies, practices, programs and functions.

While the Gallery wishes to maintain an active presence in the media and to present clear explanations of fact and policy to the Canadian public, it must be vigilant that erroneous or sensitive information is not inadvertently released.

### **6.3 Corporate Identity**

Corporate identity means the outward manifestations of the Gallery and its activities. The Gallery must comply with the Federal Identity Program and the Gallery's Corporate Identity Policy. The Gallery is required to manage its corporate identity and should ensure that the policy and standards on corporate identity are fully implemented as an integral part of its overall management of responsibilities.

The different applications of the corporate identity rules and guidelines range from the "permanent media" (stationary, signage, vehicle markings, personnel identification) to the "transitory media" (all types of printed material, advertising, audio-visuals, exhibitions, etc.).

### **6.4 Advertising**

All advertising should adhere to the Corporate Identity Policy. Since the Department of Public Affairs is responsible for the implementation of this policy, to ensure consistent public corporate image, all advertising will not be released until approved by the Director of Public Affairs.

### **6.5 Special Events**

The Special Events Unit oversees, coordinates, co-produces, solicits, and directs events related to exhibitions or to the National Gallery's public spaces, including facilities rental, performing-arts events, VIP tours and dinners, receptions, and exhibition openings. It also creates and sponsors non-program public events, develops new audiences, and generates revenues.

### **6.6 Publications**

Under the guidance of the Publications Review Committee, Publications is responsible to produce and market print material to support the National Gallery's exhibitions and other programs, material which is appropriate to its subjects and its audiences, of high quality given the criteria selected and within the budgets set out for each item.

### **6.7 Web**

The Gallery embraces the strengths of the web and uses it as a platform for fulfilling its mandate and achieving its communications goals. The guidelines of this policy document and those of the Treasury Board apply to the use of Web 2.0. Facilitation of information sharing and collaboration on the web is conducted in both official languages using social networking sites, video-sharing sites, blogs and other web communications tools.

## **6.8 Copyright**

*Reproduction Rights and Sales* provides access for media, scholars, publishers, and the interested public to reproductions (photos, slides and digital files) of works in the National Gallery's collections. The service is first of all at the disposal of Collections and Research for documentation of the artworks.

## **6.9 Crisis Management**

Good communications, within the Gallery and with external interest groups, is an essential element of effective crisis management. The Gallery is responsible to undertake contingency planning, develop standard operating procedures, and designate a single focus of responsibility for all communications with the public and appropriate stakeholders. This is essential for the timely provision of accurate, relevant and consistent information to facilitate the delivery of services, to eliminate the potential for contradiction and to bolster public confidence.

## **6.10 Review**

Work plans in Marketing and Communications areas are reviewed quarterly against stated objectives, and reinforced or redirected as needed.

# **7. FACTORS AFFECTING THE COMMUNICATION POLICY**

## **7.1 Legislation**

The Gallery's communication policy and programs are strongly influenced by statutory requirements. The Gallery must comply with the requirements of the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act. Moreover, Chapter XX of the Museums Act establishes and outlines the parameters of the Gallery's activities, clearly emphasizing communication with the public.

The Museum must:

- a. Communicate the results of its research Sec 12 (f);
- b. Inform of its discoveries by such means as education and communication as appropriate Sec 12(k);

## **7.2 Public Confidence**

Given its mandate to further knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of art in general among all Canadians, the Gallery's communications policy reflects the organization's role as a public body specifically commissioned for that purpose. It also recognizes the interests of the general public.

The objective of the Gallery's communications policy within the confines of law, is to ensure that the Gallery is perceived as a respectable institution concerning visual arts in Canada. Therefore, it is important to develop and maintain effective communication links with the media and special interest groups and to be appropriately responsive to the general public.

### **7.3 Guidelines on Communications**

The Gallery's communications policy gives consideration to the principles laid out by Treasury Board, as follows:

#### **a. Service to the public**

The Gallery will provide the public with prompt, courteous and impartial service that is sensitive to their needs, responsive to their concerns, and protective of their rights.

#### **b. Management and co-ordination**

The Gallery is responsible for integrating communications into the corporate management process. It will:

- ensure that communications staff, policy advisors and managers carry out their shared roles and responsibilities for the management and implementation of Gallery communications;
- ensure an appropriate distribution of resources among all programs and functions allotted to communications planning and management;
- assess the public environment in relations to policies, programs and major initiatives;
- include communications plans as part of the planning process;
- prepare a strategic communications plan integrating institutional policies;
- prepare an operational communications plan which translates strategies into activities and identifies requirements within the operational budget;
- ensure that accountability is assigned for the approval of all communications projects;
- monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of communications activities in relation to the objectives stated in communications plans;
- on politically sensitive issues, seek the advice of the Privy Council Office on communications issues that may have government-wide implications or require co-ordination;
- seek arrangements for the designation of a single focus of responsibility for communications with the public in developing contingency plans for crisis management; and,

- make use of the web and related social media as powerful tools for communicating with the public.

c. Responsibility for dissemination of information

The Gallery will ensure that information about its policies, programs, functions, discoveries and services is made available or disseminated in all regions of Canada. It will:

- Respond as fully as possible to public inquiries, without unnecessarily channeling the request through the Access to Information Act or Privacy Act.
- Canadians have a right to access the Gallery records (with exceptions, to be legally defined and designed to protect essential public and private interests). The Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act give the public legal access to the information in the Gallery records except for certain limited exceptions. This does not mean that all requests for information must be handled through this process. The formal use of the legislation is meant to complement existing communications channels.
- Designate primary spokespersons to communicate with the public, the media and members of Parliament;
- Maintain an index of published material or material available for purchase, and ensure that all published material is available for examination by the public;
- Maintain an index of collections and make it available for use by qualified publics; and,
- Present such information on the Gallery's website in a timely, transparent and accessible manner.

d. Official Languages

The Gallery will respect the equality of status of the two official languages as established by the Charter of Rights and Freedom and the Official Languages Act. Gallery employees answering the telephone or responding to correspondence will therefore ensure that the response is provided in the official language of the person making the inquiry.

e. Presentation and visibility

The Gallery will:

- make every reasonable effort to provide access to information on an equal basis in all regions of Canada and pursue fair communications practices by avoiding sexual stereotyping, ensuring representative depiction of all members of Canadian Society and taking measures to communicate

effectively with disabled persons and with members of multicultural communities; and

- ensure Gallery and Federal visibility by identifying its programs, activities and facilities in accordance with the Corporate Image Policy and the Federal Identity Program, when required.

## **References**

- 1990 Museums Act, s. 5

Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, Administrative Policy Manual, Chapter 480, "Government communications policy," p3. This policy takes effect on April 1, 2002. It replaces the *Government Communications Policy*, which was issued in 1988, published in the *Treasury Board Administrative Policy Manual, Communications Volume, Chapter 1*, and last revised on November 28, 1996, when it became available in electronic form.